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LEHIGH RIVER SOJOURN**

2005

June 24-27

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Lehigh River Sojourn -- Day 4

Megan Hetrick

Today on the sojourn we learned about the Lehigh River Stocking Association. It was started in 1991 by Ted Miller. They stock the river to restore and revitalize the river and to improve water quality. They stock trout from Jim Thorpe to Northampton. The association is run by a fundraiser. They stock three species of trout - Brown, Rainbow, and Brook. They stock trout because it is the strongest and most likely fish to survive. The Brown Trout are stocked in November because they will have a better survival rate in that month. The higher the water temperature the more stressful the trout are so they stock the trout depending on the water temperature. They can stock more matured fish in the spring and the species is usually Rainbow. Hurricanes and floods help the trout to survive because they clear up crib dams so they trout can get through and also make the water quality better. Shad is a kind of fish they would also like to stock. The dams would have to be cleared so the shad can travel farther because the farther the healthier. The Lehigh River Stocking Association is also trying to get dam releases more often so the fish can be stocked more often. The Lehigh River had an article in the Fly Fisherman magazine on how good the fishing is and they want to keep it that way. The try not to stock fish in the summer because there is more pollution from rainfall and problems with sewage treatment.

The sojourn today was really fun. I was in a canoe with Jena Lerch and John Mauser. Mr. Mauser showed us the old towns where people would live so they could be by the canal. He also mentioned about the Northern Catalpa tree which had beautiful flowers the smelled really good. He mentioned that the tree had large pods that were form 8-10 inches long. We had lunch under the Treichler's Bridge and then ended the sojourn at the TriBoro Sportsmen's club. At the sportsmen's club we learned to kayak, went swimming, and had dinner. That was the end of our trip.

Jena Lerch

Today started off at 6'o clock, when I woke up. After my brother, Ryan, and I were ready to leave, my mom dropped us off at the Walnutport Canal, where we met Mr. John Mauser, my former, now retired, math teacher. My brother and I waited at the table until, shortly after, Megan Hetrick, a student at Northampton going into 8th grade, and Tony Bunce, a student going into 9th grade (here for the 4th day) came. Ryan, Megan, and I signed in at the table, and received a Sojourn t-shirt and a green wrist band. Mr. Mauser then took Ryan, Megan, Tony, and Travis Dzidual (another student entering 9th grade) to the river to get used to walking on the rocks. It was tricky at first, but then I got used to it. We picked up rocks and found many interesting critters, such as a mayfly nymph and a water penny, which show that the water in the Lehigh River is not polluted, and has good quality. We then walked up to the old lockhouse where Mr. Mauser explained that the living conditions were crowded in the old house. He said that all of the children had to sleep in the attic, and that if there happened to be brothers and sisters, they would simply be separated by a sheet. He also said that the canal is lined with wood, because there is a layer of stone underneath, which would scratch boats. Afterwards, we listened to a speech about the stocking of fish in the river, and a safety speech. Finally, we entered our canoe, and embarked on our journey.

We had to look out for rocks, so that our canoe wouldn't stop or tip over. The person in the back of the canoe (in my canoe it was Mr. Mauser) steered. When you are on the river, it is very beautiful and scenic. It definately does not feel as if you are in a city or town. It seems like you are in a whole different, gorgeous paradise. We saw a blue osprey and mallards. Years ago, coal was transported on

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the lehigh river on barges. When it stopped, a whole town shut down. When we canoed past it, I saw an old barn, an old foundation, and an old blacksmith shop. Despite the beauty and health of the river, we still found trash. Mr. Mauser picked some up, and someone cut the plastic gallon container into a handy tool to get water out of the canoes, and of course, the splash our friends.

The rapids were an especially fun part. Each canoe went alone down the section where there was even a small drop. We stopped along the side after, and waited for everyone else. We went back in the canoes, paddled for a while, and ate lunch under the Treicher's bridge. It looks a lot larger from underneath!

After everyone was finished eating, the Air Quality Partnership talked about many things. They said that in the Lehigh Valley, ozone and particulate matter (PM 2.5) are large problems. This partnership actually used to be called the Ozone Partnership, but it was discovered that PM 2.5 is a large problem as well. There are about 100 members now, including Air Products, LaFarge, and PPL. They want to make sure that people get involved with the environment, and write letters to state representatives if there is ever a problem.

Ozone contributors include car emissions. To lower the dangerous ozone level, we can car pool, and not drive on certain days when it is already too high.

Particulate Matter comes out of factories, and includes dust and soot. CO2 causes global warming, which is a huge problem. This comes from power and cement plants, and members of the Air Quality Partnership can work to lower CO2 and PM 2.5 emissions. This will help keep our streams, rivers, animals, and plants, clean and healthy.

After the talk, we went back into the canoe, and paddled to Tri Boro Sportsmen's Club. It started to rain, but it wasn't thundering or lightening. We swam, and got kayaking lessons, which were really neat. After we ate dinner, my brother and I left to go home, after a great, and fun, learning experience.

Tony Bunce

The final day of the sojourn was a great one. Today, we traveled from Walnutport to Triboro Sportsmen's Club. The total distance was about 10 miles, filled with calm and whitewater. Our crew was also joined by three new members today, Ryan Lerch, Jena Lerch, and Megan Hetrick. In the canoes we had three people instead of two which resulted in a new challenge, which we quickly got accustomed to. Ryan, Travis, and I, Tony, were in one canoe and Jena, Megan, and Mr. Mauser were in the other. In the beginning we were still getting used to the three people per canoe, learning to paddle on opposite sides was something we learned fast. Throughout the course of the day we had an ongoing water battle between our two canoes with Mr. Mauser's canoe winning. The sojourn stopped under Treichlers Bridge for lunch, here our crew went swimming and heard a talk about air quality. When we finally reached Triboro we went swimming again in the river. We also played frisbee in the water and had a kayaking lesson in whitewater kayaks. After this, the sojourn ate dinner and when we were all done everyone said their farewells until next year.

All four days of the Lehigh River Sojourn were fun and challenging, some more than others. I believe that day 1 was the most challenging, even though it went the shortest distance. The water was extremely shallow which caused you to drag your canoe almost every ten minutes or so. The headwind on the lake in front of the Francis E. Walter Dam did not help either. If you stopped paddling, you stopped dead in the water. On day 2 we went whitewater rafting in the gorge, which was the best day of sojourn. Hitting all the waves and rapids with your raft was so much fun and we got soaked. We could also get out and swim every time we stopped to wait for the rest of the group. In my opinion, day two was definitely the greatest day of the sojourn. Days 3 and 4 were similar in many ways, except day 3 was more challenging with its four extra miles. They both had a balance of calm and whitewater which resulted into two spectacular days. All in all the Lehigh River Sojourn was a great trip and I am glad I went on it. In conclusion I would like to thank Mr. Mauser for inviting me on this trip, the Wildlands Conservancy for starting the trip, the Morning Call for sponsoring my trip, and all the good people I met along the Lehigh River Sojourn.

Ryan Lerch

I had a very good time canoeing on, and swimming in the Lehigh River. I also got to spend time with my friends on the river. I also saw neat wildlife like stone flies and round worms. We also learned about the environment. We learned about air pollution and ground level o-zone. O-zone is good when it is high up but when it is down low it can aggravate breathing problems like asthma. We also learned about the history of the Lehigh river and that it was the only river to be privately owned. After we ate breakfast we set out on the river. There are some rocks that you have to avoid but it wasn't too hard. The only hard part is that the person in the front of the canoe has to tell the person in the back which way to go because the person in the back is the person that steers the boat. We ate lunch and right just under the Treichler's bridge. At the end of our journey we got to ride in kayaks. The kayaks were surprisingly stable. When you look at them you would think that they would tip very easy but they

don't. It is also hard to go in a straight line with they kayaks . There were about 30 people in the water and only a few tipped over. We learned the different strokes in the kayak, forward and backward. We also learned how to turn. I had a wonderful time in the Lehigh and I am looking forward to spending more time in the River

Travis Dziadual

Today on the sojourn we canoed 10 miles from the Walnutport Canal to the Tri Borough Sports Complex. All four days were similar in some ways and different in others. The first day had to be the hardest day, because of the low water level. The second day was my favorite day. Rafting had to be one of the most fun things I have ever done. Today and yesterday were pretty much the same as each other. The only difference is that today was easier than yesterday, because paddling 14 miles yesterday was really hard. Every day on the sojourn was a good day.

Today on the river was a relatively good day. Ryan and Jenna Lerch, and Megan Hetrick joined us today. Tony and I also had Ryan in our canoe. Paddling with three people was different but easier than with two. We stopped under the Treichlers Bridge for lunch. After lunch was the harder part of the stretch. This part required a little more maneuverability than the rest of the river. Today was a fun day being the last day for the sojourn. I will be back next year for another exciting weekend on the river.

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